Ordained Ministry

Section 3 of 10

United Church of Christ

MANUAL ON MINISTRY

Perspectives and Procedures for
Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry

Parish Life and Leadership Ministry
Local Church Ministries
A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ

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Manual on Ministry

Perspectives and Procedures for Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry

Manual on Ministry is published in ten separate sections or booklets. Each section is available separately or as part of the complete *Manual* that includes all ten sections in a single binder. The ten sections are:

1. Partners in Authorizing Ministry
An overview of the covenantal relationships and underlying assumptions about authorized ministry, including the ministerial codes.

2. Student in Care of Association
Commentary, processes, and procedures for those preparing to enter the Ordained Ministry of the United Church of Christ.

3. Ordained Ministry
Commentary, processes, and procedures for Ordained Ministry, including Ordained Ministerial Standing.

4. Dual Standing and Privilege of Call
Commentary, processes, and procedures for those ordained ministers of denominations other than the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who seek to serve in the United Church of Christ or who seek to enter the Ordained Ministry of the United Church of Christ. Ordained ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) should see section 5, "Ordained Ministerial Partner."

5. Ordained Ministerial Partner
Commentary, processes, and procedures related to the reconciliation of ministries with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

6. Commissioned Ministry
Commentary, processes, and procedures for Commissioned Ministry, including Commissioned Ministerial Standing.

7. Licensed Ministry
Commentary, processes, and procedures for Licensed Ministry.

8. The Oversight of Ministries Authorized by the United Church of Christ
Commentary, processes, and procedures for the nurture and accountability of the ministries of the Church.

9. Ecclesiastical Endorsement
Commentary, processes, and procedures for those seeking to serve as chaplains in professional organizations and military or other U.S. government agencies.

10. Supplemental Materials
Commentary, appendices, and a glossary related to multiple sections of *Manual on Ministry*.

Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team
Local Church Ministries
A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ
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ORDAINED MINISTRY CONTENTS

Ordained Ministry 1

Constitutional Provisions 1

Commentary

Student in Care and Local Church (Steps 1–2) 2

Association Committee on the Ministry Decision to Proceed (Step 3) 3

Instructions to the Candidate (Step 4) 4

Documentation (Step 5) 4

Consideration of the Documentation (Step 6) 6

Ordination Examination (Step 7) 6

Ecclesiastical Council (Steps 8–9) 10

Seeking A Call (Step 10) 11

The Call and Its Terms (Step 11) 13

Call and Covenant (Step 12) 14

The Ordination Service (Steps 13–14) 16

Reporting and Record Keeping (Step 15) 17

Ordained Ministry Chart 18

The Church's Expectations of its Candidates for Ordination 28

Ordained Ministerial Standing 30

Constitutional Provisions 30

Bylaws Provisions 30

Introduction and Overview 31

Ordination. The Granting of Ordained Ministerial Standing 31

Privilege of Call 32

The Transfer of Ordained Ministerial Standing 32

Application for Transfer (Step 1) 31

Consideration of the Application (Steps 2–3) 33

Covenanting (Step 4) 34

Reporting (Step 5) 34

Installation (Steps 6–7) 34

The Location of Ordained Ministerial Standing 35

Leave of Absence from Ordained Ministerial Standing 37

Bylaw Provision 37

Commentary 37

Termination of Ordained Ministerial Standing 38

Reinstatement of Ordained Ministerial Standing 38

Installation of An Ordained Minister 40

Bylaw Provisions 40

Guidelines for Installation 40

Transfer of Ordained Ministry Chart 42

ORDAINED MINISTRY

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

20. The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and society. The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird the ministry of its members by nurturing faith, calling forth gifts, and equipping members for Christian service.

21. The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required. Recognizing God's call, the ecclesiastical authorization is granted by an Association through the rite of ordination; through commissioning, licensing, granting either ordained ministerial standing or ordained ministerial partner standing and other acts of authorization.

22. Ordination is the rite whereby the United Church of Christ, through an Association in cooperation with the person and a local church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to ordained ministry, and sets that person apart by prayer and the laying on of hands. By this rite ordained ministerial standing and status as an Ordained Ministerial Partner is conferred and authorization given to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

23. An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been called by God and ordained to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.

24. Ordained ministerial standing is ongoing recognition as an Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ and provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry. Ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ is granted by and held in an Association and confers voting membership in the Association.

25. The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to a local church establishes a covenantal relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the local church, and the United Church of Christ, as represented by an Association or a Conference. The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to other forms of ministry recognized by an Association or Conference of the United Church of Christ establishes a covenantal relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the calling body, the United Church of Christ as represented by an Association or Conference and the local church where the Ordained Minister is a member.

BYLAW PROVISIONS

105. Not more than six months prior to the completion of theological training, a student preparing for ordained ministry applies through his or her local church to its Association for approval as a candidate for ordination.

If the service of ordination is to be performed within an Association other than that of the student, the procedure, including that described in the following paragraph, is initiated by that Association and its Conference after consultation with the Association that holds the student in care.

106. The Committees on the Ministry of the Conference and Association cooperate in examining the candidate to determine ability; reasons for seeking the office of the ordained Christian ministry; education and theological attainments; knowledge of the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ; and growth in Christian faith and experience and make their recommendation of fitness to the Association. If, upon acceptance of the recommendation or upon further examination and decision by the Association itself, the candidate is found to be qualified, ordination thereby is authorized, subject to a call recognized by the Association.

107. Ordination by an Association of the United Church of Christ, in cooperation with the local church, confers ordained ministerial standing as an Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ and status as an Ordained Ministerial Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

108. After the ordination or in anticipation of it, a certificate is issued bearing the signatures of the proper officers of the Association and the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.

155. The discipline of Ordained Ministers, persons with Ordained Ministerial Partner standing, Commissioned Ministers, and Licensed Ministers is the responsibility of the Association in which their current ecclesiastical authorization is held.

156. All authorizations for ordained ministerial standing and for commissioned and licensed ministry granted by an Association are subject to periodic review by that Association.

COMMENTARY
STEPS 1–2

STUDENT IN CARE AND LOCAL CHURCH

Bylaw 105 provides that, not more than six months prior to the completion of theological training, a student preparing for the ordained ministry applies through his or her local church to its Association for approval as a candidate for ordination. The student must have been a student in care of the Association for at least on year.

An implicit assumption of this bylaw is that the local church of the student in care has been active in the preparation process with the student and the Association. This means that throughout the in care period, both the student in care and his or her local church have a responsibility to maintain a close relationship. The local church will need to find opportunities for the student to participate in the life of the local church so that the local church can see the evidence of the person's growth and development.

Early in the student in care process, the governing board or a designated committee in the local church meets with the student to explore her or his decision to prepare for ordained ministry. The local church committee then decides to recommend her or him to the Association to become a student

in care. At the conclusion of the period of preparation, the governing board or other designated committee in the local church meets with the student once again to explore the person's faith and theological perspective, the development of gifts for ordained ministry, how the person's understanding of call has changed or grown during this period of preparation, and to decide whether or not to recommend her or him to the Association to be examined for ordination. The Committee may want to read and discuss part three of the person's ordination paper.

This provision attempts to deal seriously with the notion that persons are called forth from within local churches to ordained ministry and that those same local churches have an interest and stake in those persons and in the United Church of Christ. It is crucial to have an assessment from a local church about its perception of the fitness of the student for ordination.

There should always be at least one local church of the United Church of Christ that has knowledge of the student and can recommend the student to be considered for ordination. If the local church where the student is a member feels that it does not have enough information to make a recommendation but does not want to stand in the way of the student's application, the local church could communicate this to the Association. The Association then must make clear to the student that it wants an informed recommendation by another local church. The spirit of this provision could be met through the recommendation of another local church in which the student is known and has been active. For example, the local church where the student has been active while in seminary or a local church in which the student has worked as part of his or her field education experience during seminary could be designated.

The primary agenda of the meeting between the local church committee and the student in care is to review what the in care experience has been and to reaffirm the student's earlier sense of call to ordained ministry. The local church needs to be satisfied that it is familiar with the student's pilgrimage during the period of formal preparation and can commend the student to the Association for ordination. In most cases, unless there is a glaring reason for doing otherwise, the local church makes its recommendation, in writing, to the Association.

In making its recommendation, the local church will want to provide any relevant data it has that could contribute to the decision the Association has to make regarding whether or not to ordain the person. The local church should report to the Association the nature of its relationship with the student during the in care period and any concerns it has about the student it thinks the Association should consider in its deliberations.

ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE ON THE MINISTRY DECISION TO PROCEED

In most cases the examination for, decision about, and ordination itself will be done by the Association in which the student has been in care. However, Bylaw 105 does provide for ordination in an Association other

than the one in which the student is in care. This most commonly would occur if the ordination is to take place in the local church to which the student has been called rather than in the student's home church.

In this case, the Association where the student has been in care will provide detailed information about the student to the Association where the ordination examination is to take place. Both Associations need to be satisfied that there are valid reasons for this transfer of responsibility and that it is not being done to avoid the requirements or procedures of the Association where the in care relationship is held.

If the in care process has gone well, the decision to proceed will not be a difficult one. The Association Committee on the Ministry considers the request from the local church and reviews the recommendation with the in care advisor as the basis for its decision. The judgment of the in care advisor is crucial here in determining whether or not the student is prepared for the next steps in the process. The Committee makes its decision and informs the student in care and the local church of its decision.

STEP 4

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CANDIDATE

If the Committee's decision is to take the next step with the student in care, it provides detailed instructions about the documentation it expects the student to prepare and secure. The materials are outlined in step 5 on the Ordained Ministry Chart. The Committee should be clear with the student about the length of the materials, formats to be used, and timeline for getting the materials to the Committee.

The Committee may decide to appoint a person to counsel and assist the student in the preparation of materials required by the Committee. This person could be the in care advisor, a member of the Committee on the Ministry, or another person knowledgeable about the Committee's requirements and procedures.

STEP 5

DOCUMENTATION

In preparation for its very important decision, the Association Committee on the Ministry gathers a variety of information to study in order to inform its decision. These are outlined in step 5 of the Ordained Ministry Chart. One part of this information is a three-part ordination paper prepared by the candidate.

Part one of the ordination paper is the candidate's theological perspective and grasp of the historic Christian faith. This paper is to be seen as a setting forth of one's own theological perspective, not as an academic term paper. There are many ways in which a candidate could go about writing this paper. One way to approach this paper is to articulate what one believes in the context of or in relation to the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, or in the context of or in relation to paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ. The purpose of part one of the ordination

paper is to provide a way for the student to share his or her present grasp and understanding of the teaching and traditions of the Christian Church down through the ages and to relate this to his or her own theological perspective.

Part two of the ordination paper is intended to provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate his or her knowledge and understanding of the history, theological roots, polity, and practice of the United Church of Christ. The student could write an interpretation of the history and theological roots of the United Church of Christ, referring to and commenting on key dates, persons, events, and documents that illustrate his or her interpretation in addressing the polity and practice issues. The student could identify and define some key words and use them to characterize the polity and practice of the United Church of Christ (e.g. covenant, unity, autonomy, congregational, etc.). The student then could illustrate how these understandings make claims on the way he or she will practice ministry as an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. Another approach would be to write an interpretation of paragraphs 6, 9, 16, 17, and 18 of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.

Part three of the ordination paper is intended to be an integrating statement that invites the person to relate the faith and practice of the Church to her or his own pilgrimage of faith and understandings of and intentions for her or his ministry as a person ordained by the United Church of Christ. Following are suggestions for subject matter for part three of the ordination paper:

- The person as a person of faith. What has been your faith pilgrimage? How has your understanding of yourself as a person of faith changed and grown during the time of preparation for ministry?
- The person as one called to ordained ministry. How has your understanding of call changed or grown during the period of preparation? What is your understanding of ordination? Church? Mission? Ministry? What is the challenge and vision you have for your ministry?
- The person as one called to a particular ordained ministry. How do you see your gifts for ministry being used in the type of ministry to which you have been called or to which you are seeking a call? If you are seeking a call to a pastorate, describe how you see yourself functioning as a pastor of a local church. If you are seeking a call to a ministry other than in a local church, how do you see yourself functioning in that kind of ministry and setting? Where do you see your ministry in five years? If not in a local church, how does your ministry relate to the local church?
- The person as one called to ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. How do you understand yourself as an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ? What are your commitments to the United Church of Christ and the Church Ecumenical? What are those aspects of the history, tradition, polity, and practice of the United Church of Christ that are most valued by you, and how will these shape the way you engage in the tasks of ordained ministry?

In terms of the certification of the candidate's educational attainments, it is important for the Committee to have the candidate secure and provide transcripts of the candidate's courses and grades and for the Committee to see the diploma when it is issued. Subsequent to this certification, the United Church of Christ ecclesiastical system will assume that the information about education is accurate and has been documented by the Association. This information will not necessarily be verified again.

The policy of the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team is that any fully accredited member seminary of the Association of Theological Schools is an approved seminary. It should be emphasized, however, that seminaries related to the United Church of Christ provide significant opportunities for understanding of and incorporation in the ethos of the United Church of Christ.

During their final year of seminary, students often begin seeking a call to a ministry position. The Committee on the Ministry or the in care advisor needs to instruct the candidate about what is to be included minimally in the terms of a call, procedures for negotiating a call, covenantal relationship expectations to be worked out, and what will be required of the calling body. Since these requirements and expectations are relatively new in the United Church of Christ as a result of the 1983–1984 amendments to *The Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ*, it is important for Committees on the Ministry to interpret them to all candidates for ordination.

STEP 6

CONSIDERATION OF THE DOCUMENTATION

The Committee on the Ministry spends considerable time reviewing the material provided by the candidate as well as the data it has accumulated during the in care process. In its review, it needs to ensure that all of the required materials are in hand. As the Committee reviews the material, it will decide the key issues to be explored and the questions to be raised with the candidate. It will develop a procedure for examining the candidate. When setting a date to meet with the candidate, the Committee also will inform the candidate of the procedure to be followed in the examination. It is recommended that the candidate's advisor be present for the examination. A representative of the candidate's local church also may be present.

STEP 7

ORDINATION EXAMINATION

The purpose of the ordination examination is to determine the preparedness and fitness of the candidate for ordination in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. Throughout the examination and the decision-making process, the Committee on the Ministry is aware that it is making a decision for the entire United Church of Christ.

A sample outline for the ordination examination follows:

- Introduction of the candidate, the advisor, each member of the Committee on the Ministry, and any others who may be present.
- A time for prayer or worship.
- Preview of the agenda and procedure to be used in the examination.
- A statement by the in care advisor reviewing the in care period and his or her perceptions of the candidate based on that experience.
- A statement by the candidate about his or her pilgrimage during the in care process and present sense of call to ordained ministry.
- A statement by the candidate about the type of call being sought (local church pastorate or other type of ordained ministry position) or information about a call if one is being considered or has been extended.
- Discussion by the Committee with the candidate about questions or issues raised by the candidate's statement or by any of the documentation provided by the candidate.
- Closure, including a statement by the Committee to the candidate about next steps.

The Committee's task in the examination is to satisfy itself that the candidate is prepared for and can faithfully and effectively carry out the responsibilities of ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

The items on which the candidate is to be examined are outlined in step 7 on the Ordained Ministry Chart and represent the provisions of Bylaw 106 of the United Church of Christ. They are the candidate's ability; reasons for seeking the office of ordained Christian ministry; educational and theological attainments; knowledge of the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ; growth in Christian faith and experience; personal qualities; and preparation and fitness for the call the person is considering or the type of ministry the person is seeking. "The Church's Expectations of Its Candidates for Ordination," following the Ordained Ministry Chart, is another way of stating the expectations the United Church of Christ has of its ordained ministers.

In conducting its examination, the Committee on the Ministry will use all of the data it has gathered to guide it during the examination and in making its decision. The Committee will be alert both to tangible and intangible evidences of the candidate's fitness for ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. It will recognize that fitness is more than having attained the educational qualifications. Below are samples of questions that may enable the Committee to inquire into the substance of the candidate's fitness for ordained ministry.

- Faith and Calling. Is this a person of mature Christian faith? Does this person have a personal spiritual life and practice that can sustain her or him in the rigors of ordained ministry? Does this

person understand the meaning of call to ministry and give evidence of an authentic call to ordained ministry? Can this person clearly articulate her or his theological perspective?

- Church Loyalty and Commitment. How does this person understand the polity of the United Church of Christ and the role and expectations of an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ within this polity? Is this person committed to the United Church of Christ? Will this person be a respected representative of the United Church of Christ? How does this person understand the ecumenical commitments of the United Church of Christ and what are his or her ecumenical understandings and commitments?
- Knowledge and Skills. Does this person have a general liberal arts education and give evidence of being an educated person? Is this person adequately educated in Bible, theology, church history, worship, pastoral care and counseling, administration, church education, and so on? Is there documentation that this person has acquired the skills necessary for ordained ministry? Does this person give evidence of knowing the norms of the United Church of Christ in these areas? Can this person do the work of an ordained minister?
- Character and Personal Qualities. Is this a mature person with a sense of integrity? Is this a person others will be able to trust and on whom they will be able to rely? Will this person be dependable? Will he or she continue to grow?
- Understandings of Ordained Ministry. Does this person have a realistic understanding of the expectations, requirements, and demands of ordained ministry? Has the person received or is the person seeking a call to a particular type of ordained ministry? How does the person see herself or himself functioning in that particular type of ministry and particular setting for ministry?

An effective way to inquire into these matters is to pose situations or present case studies for the candidate to analyze. Then the candidate could describe how she or he would approach or respond to the situation or cases.

It may be helpful during the examination to have the candidate reflect and comment on the ordination vows to be made during the ordination services.

After the candidate and any guests have been dismissed, the Committee deliberates on its decision. In considering its decision, the Committee reflects on all of the data it has gathered during step 5 and from the examination in step 7. This decision by the Committee is one of its most significant and has direct bearing on the quality of ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ.

Options before the Committee include:

- "Yes." The Committee believes that the candidate meets the requirements for ordination within the United Church of Christ and, in the Committee's judgment, will be an effective and faithful ordained minister. This decision is contingent on the candidate's securing a call to an approved ordained ministry position and successful completion of steps 8–12 in the Ordained Ministry Chart.

If the candidate already has received a call contingent upon ordination, the Committee will review the terms of the call with the candidate. (See step 11 for details of this procedure.) If the call is to a body other than a local church, the Committee will explore with the candidate plans for the four-way, covenant-making meeting. (See step 12 for details of this procedure.)

- "Yes, but . . . " The Committee believes that the candidate has the potential for ordained ministry, but it has certain reservations or concerns that must be addressed. The Committee may want to stipulate additional requirements of the candidate before making its final decision. It will be clear with the candidate what additionally needs to be done in preparation for a subsequent examination and decision.
- "No, but . . . " The Committee believes that, at this time, significant qualifications for ordination in the United Church of Christ are lacking. It may indicate under what terms and conditions it would consider the application again. It will determine whether to continue or terminate the in care relationship.
- "No." In some cases the Committee may have to say no to a candidate if, in its judgment, the candidate has not fulfilled and cannot fulfill in the foreseeable future the requirements for ordination or will not be an effective and faithful ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. At this time, the Committee terminates the candidate's in care relationship with the Association. The Committee may specify the conditions under which it would consider an application from the person to become an applicant for student in care status at some time in the future.

The Committee informs the candidate and the candidate's local church of its decision. If the Committee's decision is to approve the candidate, it also decides, in consultation with the candidate, when to convene an ecclesiastical council—an official meeting of an Association to authorize a person for a specific form of ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. The ecclesiastical council may be scheduled as soon as possible, or it may not be scheduled until the candidate has received a call to a ministry position recognized by the Association. (Provisions for a call based in a different Association are discussed in step 10 below.)

Each Association must determine its policy regarding whether a person is a "candidate approved for ordination pending an approved call" upon the decision by the Association Committee on the Ministry or upon the decision by the Association ecclesiastical council. When a candidate has been approved for ordination, this information should be forwarded to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team so that this qualification can be noted on the candidate's Ministerial Profile.

In either event, authorization for the ordination service is withheld until the candidate has an approved call to an ordained ministry position recognized by the Association.

STEPS 8–9

ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL

When a candidate has successfully completed the ordination examination by the Association Committee on the Ministry, the next step in the approval process is an ecclesiastical council. Depending on the Association's policy, the ecclesiastical council could be held before or following the point at which the candidate has received a call to an ordained ministry position recognized by the Association.

The Association Committee on the Ministry arranges for an official meeting of an ecclesiastical council and decides with the candidate what type of presentation the candidate will make to the ecclesiastical council and how all or a portion of the candidate's ordination paper will be made available to the delegates to the ecclesiastical council.

Ideally, distribution of the candidate's ordination paper to the delegates in time for their reading before the ecclesiastical council is encouraged. If this is not feasible, perhaps certain sections of the paper or a summary of the paper could be made available. In any case, the complete paper should be available to the delegates at the time of the ecclesiastical council.

There are a variety of options available for the candidate's presentation to the ecclesiastical council. Among these are for the candidate to read all or portions of the ordination paper, to present a summary of the ordination paper, or to comment on the ordination paper.

The purpose of the ecclesiastical council is to authorize the ordination of the candidate. Following is a sample agenda with commentary for the ecclesiastical council:

- The Association Committee on the Ministry introduces the candidate and makes its recommendation that the candidate be authorized for ordination. In making its recommendation, the Committee will provide a detailed rationale supporting its recommendation. This rationale will include the Committee's experience with the person through the in care time, the process used by the Committee to reach its recommendation, notation of major commendations from references, something about the candidate's theological and polity understandings, and an evaluation of the candidate by the in care advisor, and so forth.

- The candidate makes a presentation based on her or his ordination paper. The presentation should demonstrate the person's theological, polity, and functional understandings of ordained ministry and relate these to the commitment and preparation of the person for the particular type of ordained ministry position to which she or he has been called or to which she or he is seeking a call.
- The ecclesiastical council engages in an examination of the candidate in order to satisfy itself as to the preparedness and fitness of the candidate for ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. The examination is not limited to the presentation or ordination paper of the candidate.
- On completion of the examination, the ecclesiastical council votes whether or not to authorize ordination pending an approved call and the establishment of a covenantal relationship among the partners to the call. The decision the Association makes is a decision made for the entire United Church of Christ and will be binding on and honored by the other Associations of the United Church of Christ. Once ordained, the person is granted ordained ministerial standing and becomes a voting member of the Association and Conference.

SEEKING A CALL

It is essential in approving a candidate for ordination to instruct the candidate about the requirements of the Association in regard to an approved call. The critical issue here is that the call must be a call to a ministry position requiring ordination and recognized by the Association.

The functions of ordained ministry specifically defined in the Constitution of the United Church of Christ are "to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the Church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership." Since the majority of newly ordained persons are called to ministries in local churches, where these functions are regularly performed, this will not be a significant issue in recognizing the validity of the call. However, there are other ministries to which persons are called that the Association will need to review closely in order to determine whether they are ministries requiring ordination.

Each Association of the United Church of Christ needs to develop its own procedures for making decisions about ministries that it will recognize as requiring ordination. There are some principles or criteria that are recommended for use in these decisions:

- Does the United Church of Christ want this ministry to be a ministry on its behalf? That is, does the United Church of Christ, represented by the Association, see the value of having an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ in the position?

- Is there a calling body? Does the employer or calling body recognize the position as a ministry and require or desire an ordained person in this position? Will the calling body hold the person accountable for his or her performance of ministry? Will the calling body enter into a covenantal relationship with the person and the church in behalf of this ministry?
- In exceptional cases where the church wants the ministry but the employer does not recognize the position as a ministry or will not participate with the person and the church in a covenantal relationship, then it is necessary for a community of the church, approved by the Association, to fulfill the requirements and functions of the calling body. (For example, this could be the Association itself, a local church, the Conference, or a special board set up specifically for the purpose of calling a person to minister on behalf of the United Church of Christ in this circumstance.)

Since all ordained ministry is ministry of the church, it is required that a community of the church give direction to the ministry of persons, control their entrance to and exit from ordained ministry positions, and hold persons accountable for their ministries. Ways need to be available to this church community to observe firsthand the functioning of the person in the ministry so that it can make its judgments about both the person and the ministry position.

- Does the position provide the opportunity to perform the functions of ordained ministry—preach and teach the gospel, administer the sacraments and rites of the Church, and exercise pastoral care and leadership?
- If the position does not provide the opportunity to perform the functions of ordained ministry in any obvious or regular way, is the ordained minister committed to performing these functions on request in local churches or in other settings within the Association or Conference?

The United Church of Christ traditionally has recognized the following as valid ministries for United Church of Christ ordained ministers:

- Pastors of United Church of Christ local churches, including associate pastors, assistant pastors, ministers of Christian education, and so on.
- Campus ministers and college or university chaplains.
- Chaplains in the military, federal prisons, hospitals, and a variety of institutions for the aged, children, disabled and handicapped, and so on.
- Teachers and administrators in seminaries.
- Persons serving in Conference and denominational staff positions.
- Missionaries.

- Persons serving in staff positions in ecumenical agencies and organizations.
- Pastoral counselors serving in church-related pastoral counseling centers.
- Church-related health and human service institutional executives and staff members.

There have been additional ministries recognized by some Associations as valid ministries for ordained ministers under certain circumstances, such as:

- Certain ministries of pastoral care or counseling in secular institutions or organizations that serve as calling bodies.
- Certain ministries of advocacy or community change (peace, justice, etc.) related to institutions, organizations, or communities that serve as calling bodies.

There are other ministries that could be added to these lists if, in the judgment of the Association, they meet the spirit of the requirements for ordained ministry.

If a candidate begins negotiating a call to a position that does not have recognition or approval by the Association as an ordained ministry position, then a process needs to be put in motion to secure a decision about the ministry position.

If a candidate approved for ordination receives a call from a calling body located in another Association, the ordaining Association will consult with the Association in which the ministry is located to determine if it is a ministry requiring ordination and if it is one acceptable to the ordaining Association. In some cases, the ordination may take place in the Association to which the call is located. In these cases, close cooperation between the two Associations is vital.

If considerable time has elapsed from the time the candidate was approved for ordination and the time a call is received, the Committee on the Ministry reserves the right to meet with the person to review his or her experience, growth, and present fitness for ordained ministry before scheduling the ordination service.

THE CALL AND ITS TERMS

STEP 11

When an ordained minister is called to an ordained ministry position, a written document, called the "letter of call" or "terms of the call," is developed. This document spells out the expectations and commitments both of the local church or calling body and the ordained minister. Step 11 in the Ordained Ministry Chart provides some details on the specific items to be considered in the terms of the call. While provision for each of the items may not be included in the terms of the call, each should be considered and explored. Many Conferences have their own recommendations about compensation that need to be considered when the terms of the call are being developed.

It should be noted that paragraph 122 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ provides that the terms of the call should specify that the local church agrees to participate in the United Church of Christ pension fund on the ordained minister's behalf. It is expected that calling bodies will provide adequate pension benefits as well.

A standard format for the terms of the call to a local church is provided in *A Local Church Seeks a Pastor*, a publication of the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team. (See Appendix E in the supplemental section of this *Manual*.) This format for the terms of the call provides a structured way to consider and describe the specifics to be agreed on by the candidate and the local church.

In most cases, when the call is to a local church, the normal placement procedures of the United Church of Christ will be utilized in which a Conference or Association placement officer will be directly involved in the search and call process. It is assumed that the placement officer will represent the Association guidelines and expectations about the terms of the call and the covenantal relationship among the candidate, the local church, and the Association.

In those instances in which the call is from a local church or other calling body but a Conference or Association placement officer has not been present to represent the Association, the Association will need to participate as indicated in step 12 in the Ordained Ministry Chart.

STEP 12

CALL AND COVENANT

Paragraph 25 of the Constitution states that, "The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to a local church establishes a covenantal relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the local church, and the United Church of Christ as represented by an Association or a Conference." This is what is referred to throughout this *Manual* as the "three-way covenant."

A three-way covenant is established at the time the terms of the call are developed with the assistance of the Conference or Association placement officer. It is recommended that the placement officer provide the Association Committee on the Ministry with a report on the call and a copy of the letter of call. Only in those instances in which the Committee on the Ministry has serious questions or concerns about the relationship that has been established or the terms of the call that have been negotiated, would it require a meeting of the candidate, the local church, and the Committee on the Ministry.

Paragraph 25 of the Constitution also provides for the following: "The Call of an Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner to other forms of ministry recognized by an Association or Conference of the United Church of Christ establishes a covenantal relationship among the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner, the calling body, the United Church of Christ as represented by an Association or Conference, and the local church where the Ordained Minister or Ordained Ministerial Partner is a mem-

ber." This is what is referred to throughout this *Manual* as the "four-way covenant."

A four-way covenant is motivated by the Church's conviction that ordained ministers in ministries other than in local churches need to be active and participating members of a local church of the United Church of Christ and that calling bodies have a responsibility to the ecclesiastical system when they employ an ordained minister.

Procedurally, step 12 in the Ordained Ministry Chart calls for a meeting of the ordained minister, representatives of the local church where the ordained minister holds membership, representatives of the calling body, and the Association Committee on the Ministry. The purpose of this meeting is to determine the basis for a covenantal relationship among these four partners. (See the section on covenant in the "Partners in Authorizing Ministry" section of this *Manual*.) Some issues for consideration during this meeting include:

- Are the terms of the call within the guidelines of the Association and satisfactory to the Committee on the Ministry? Is the ordained minister being treated fairly and justly? Step 11 in the Ordained Ministry Chart provides a comprehensive listing of items to be considered in the terms of the call.
- Is this a ministry on behalf of the United Church of Christ? Do the calling body and the Association value having an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ in the position?
- What will be the nature of the installation service for the ordained minister into this position? Where and when will it be held? In what way will each of the covenantal partners participate and what vows will each make?
- What will be the nature and degree of involvement and participation by the ordained minister in the local church where she or he is a member?
- What will be the nature and degree of involvement and participation by the ordained minister in the life of the United Church of Christ beyond the local church and provision by the calling body for the time and encouragement for this?
- Is it clear how the person is accountable both to the calling body and to the United Church of Christ in distinct and interdependent ways?
- What procedures will be used to provide the periodic review of the agreements made among the covenantal partners? What will be the timeline for this review?

As a result of this, there should be a basis for a covenantal relationship among the partners. All partners should be able to acknowledge that a covenantal relationship implies that there is a sacred character to the relationship and its stipulations and that God is at work in and through their relationship.

In many cases, because the call to an ordained ministry position involves a move by the ordained minister, the local church where the ordained minister will establish membership is not yet determined. Thus, the local church of membership cannot be involved at this stage in the covenant-making process. When this is the case, plans should be made for involving the local church of membership as soon as feasible after the ordained minister has established that membership. An appropriate time for this might be in connection with the installation service of the ordained minister. The Association always will be clear that membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ is a requirement of all ordained ministers except those provided for in paragraph 114 of the Bylaws.

The procedures specified in step 12 in the Ordained Ministry Chart usually take place in the Association in which the calling body is located. In those instances where this is not the Association that has approved the candidate for ordination, there will need to be cooperation and communication between the two Associations. The ordaining Association may request documentation from the candidate or from the Association participating in the call and covenanting process regarding both the ministry and the terms of the call. In some cases, the Association in which the ministry is located may need to provide the ordaining Association with its documentation and rationale for recognizing the ministry as one requiring ordination.

STEPS 13–14

THE ORDINATION SERVICE

Once the ordination is authorized and a call has been finalized, it is the responsibility of the Association, through its Committee on the Ministry, to plan the ordination service. The Committee should work in cooperation with the candidate, the local church where the candidate is a member, the local church where the ordination service is to be held, if other than where the candidate is a member, and the calling body, if the call is not to a local church.

It should be emphasized that ordination is an act of the Church and is the responsibility of the Association. The Association should establish guidelines to instruct the planning of the ordination service that clearly identify the roles of the person, the local church, the calling body, and the Association in the planning process.

An ordination service for use in the United Church of Christ is found in the *Book of Worship*. (See Appendix E in the supplemental materials section of this *Manual*.) The Service of Ordination is to be held no sooner than one month after the date of the vote to authorize ordination. In most cases, the ordination service will be held in the local church where the candidate is a member. Under certain circumstances, however, the Association may approve holding the ordination service in the local church to which the candidate has been called.

In scheduling the ordination service, the Association needs to consider the importance of having present representatives of the churches of the Association. Associations are discouraged from scheduling Sunday morning ordinations and are encouraged to consider afternoon or evening services

to ensure maximum opportunity for attendance by members of the churches of the Association.

The Association presents to the newly ordained minister an ordination certificate attesting to the actions taken. The Association needs to ensure ample time—three weeks— to secure the certificate of ordination from the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team.

REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING

It is important that Associations keep complete and accurate records of authorizations by their Association Committee on the Ministry and the Association ecclesiastical council. Often, the record keeping and reporting responsibilities are done by the Conference office.

It is recommended that a file for each person processed for ordination be kept in the Association or Conference office. The file should contain all documentation provided by the person, copies of transcripts and diplomas, letters of reference, reports by the in care advisor, and copies of those portions of the minutes of meetings of the Committee on the Ministry and the Association at which the person's authorization for ordination was considered.

The ordination of a person should be reported to the Office of General Ministries and to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team. Forms are available for these reports.

The Office of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ keeps the official listing of all ordained ministers of the United Church of Christ and publishes this listing annually in the *United Church of Christ Yearbook*.

The Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team uses the information provided by the Association in the circulation of Ministerial Profiles and in the compilation of denominational statistics about its persons authorized for ministry.

ORDAINED MINISTRY STEPS 1–5

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
1 A student in care of an Association requests that the governing board (or other designated committee) of the local church where he or she is a member recommend to the Association that he or she be examined for ordination in the United Church of Christ. A student is expected to be in care at least one year prior to ordination.	
The student in care is interviewed by the governing board, which determines whether or not to recommend the student in care to the Association to be examined for ordination.	2 The local church receives the request from the student to recommend him or her for examination for ordination. If the governing board approves the request, the local church recommends in writing that the Association examine the student for ordination. This application can be made no earlier than six months prior to the student's completion of theological training.
5 The candidate prepares and submits the following materials to the Association Committee on the Ministry: a. Ordination Paper (Part 1). The person's theological perspective and grasp of the historic Christian faith. b. Ordination Paper (Part 2). The person's understanding of the history, theological roots, polity, and practice of the United Church of Christ. c. Ordination Paper (Part 3). The person's faith pilgrimage and understanding of the ministry. d. A sermon written by the candidate. e. Verification of membership and participation in a local church of the United Church of Christ. f. Verification of current student in care relationship. (cont.)	The local church provides a statement verifying the student's membership and participation in the local church.

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
	3 The Association Committee on the Ministry receives the request from the local church and reviews the recommendation with the advisor of the student in care. It notifies the student in care and his or her local church of its decision to proceed or not.
	4 If the Association Committee on the Ministry decides to proceed, it provides the student in care with detailed instructions about the materials the student must provide the Committee prior to and in preparation for the ordination examination. (Materials are outlined in Step 5.)
	The Association Committee on the Ministry may appoint a person to assist the candidate in the preparation of the required documentation. It also should instruct the candidate about its requirements for a valid call and approved calling body.

ORDAINED MINISTRY STEPS 5–7

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
g. Certification of educational attainment including: 1. a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. 2. a Master of Divinity degree, or its equivalent, from an approved theological seminary or notification that such a degree will be granted prior to ordination. 3. documentation of ability, skills, knowledge, and training for ordained ministry, such as career assessment data, fieldwork, internships, or clinical pastoral education reports. Evaluation of the candidate from these experiences should be included. h. At least four letters of reference, including one from the seminary, one from the student in care advisor, and one from an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. i. A Ministerial Profile prepared by the candidate and provided by the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team. j. A statement of where the candidate is in the process of seeking a call.	
The candidate meets with the Association Committee on the Ministry to be examined.	A representative from the candidate's local church may be present for the ordination examination.

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
	6 The Association Committee on the Ministry receives the material provided by the candidate, reviews it with the advisor, and decides whether or not to examine the candidate. It informs the candidate and the candidate's local church of its decision. If it decides to proceed, it sets a date to meet with and examine the candidate.
	7 The Association Committee on the Ministry examines the candidate to determine her or his: a. Ability. b. Reasons for seeking the office of ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ. c. Educational and theological attainments. d. Knowledge of the history, polity, and practices of the United Church of Christ. e. Growth in Christian faith and experience. f. Personal qualities. (cont.)

ORDAINED MINISTRY STEPS 7–10

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
The candidate makes a presentation to the ecclesiastical council, describing his or her commitment to and preparation for ordained ministry to which he or she has been called or is seeking a call.	Representatives from the local church where the candidate is a member attend the ecclesiastical council.
10 If the candidate has not yet received a call, the candidate continues to seek a call.	

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
	g. Preparation and fitness for the call the person is considering or the type of ministry the person is seeking. If the Committee is satisfied that the candidate meets the requirements for ordination, it recommends the candidate to the Association for approval and authorization for ordination.
	8 The Association Committee on the Ministry arranges for an Association ecclesiastical council and promotes attendance at it. It plans with the candidate how the candidate's ordination paper will be shared with the delegates to the ecclesiastical council.
	9 The Association ecclesiastical council receives the recommendation of the Committee on the Ministry, hears the candidate's presentation describing his or her commitment to and preparation for ordained ministry, and learns of the terms of call if one has been received. It then further examines the candidate and the Committee's recommendation. The delegates to the ecclesiastical council vote on whether or not to authorize ordination of the candidate pending graduation from seminary and acceptance of a call approved by the Association if these are not complete. In this, the ecclesiastical council acts for the entire United Church of Christ. The Association instructs its Committee on the Ministry to proceed with plans for the ordination. The service of ordination is to be held no sooner than one month after the date of the vote to authorize ordination.
	If the candidate is considering a call from a calling body that has not been recognized by the Association as a valid setting for ordained ministry, procedures are instituted to secure a decision about this recognition.

ORDAINED MINISTRY STEPS 11–12

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
The candidate works out, and agrees to, the terms of the call with the local church or other calling body.	
The candidate participates in the covenant-making meeting.	Representatives of the local church where the candidate is a member participate in the covenant-making meeting.

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
11 The calling body, which usually will be a local church, extends a call to the candidate and sends a copy of the letter of call to the Association Committee on the Ministry. The letter of call should include: a. A description of the ministry position describing how it provides for this person to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the Church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership. b. A description of the time requirements. c. A description of provision for participation in the life of the wider United Church of Christ. d. A description of why an ordained minister is valued in the position. e. Provision for the following: 1. salary and housing. 2. pension program. 3. health insurance. 4. life insurance. 5. disability insurance. 6. travel allowance. 7. moving expenses. 8. Social Security allowance. 9. reimbursement for professional expenses. 10. vacation. 11. continuing education time and funds. 12. sabbatical leave. 13. evaluation procedures and timeline. 14. conflict resolution procedures to be used as needed. 15. termination procedures.	The Association may consult with the candidate or calling body or local church during the development of the terms of the call.
Representatives of the calling body participate in the covenant-making meeting.	12 If the call is from a calling body other than a local church, the Association Committee on the Ministry convenes a covenant-making meeting of the following: (a) the candidate; (b) representatives of the local church where the candidate is a member (unless the candidate has not yet established membership in a local church in the new location); (c) representatives of the calling body; and (d) the Association Committee on the Ministry. They review the letter of call and its provisions and explore the nature of the covenantal relationship among the four partners. All need to agree that there is a basis for a covenantal relationship among them.

ORDAINED MINISTRY STEPS 13–15

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
The candidate cooperates with the Association in planning the ordination service.	Representatives of the local church where the candidate is a member participate in planning the ordination service.
The candidate is ordained.	Representatives of the local church where the candidate is a member participate in the ordination service.

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
Representatives of the calling body participate in planning the ordination service.	13 The Association Committee on the Ministry has the responsibility for planning the ordination service in cooperation with the candidate, the local church where the candidate is a member, the local church where the ordination service is to be held if other than where the candidate is a member, and the calling body if other than a local church. It invites members of churches in the Association to attend the service.
Representatives of the calling body participate in the ordination service.	14 The Association, on behalf of the United Church of Christ and in cooperation with the person and the local church, ordains the candidate during a worship service held at a time representatives of the churches of the Association can attend. All those who are partners in the covenantal relationship participate in this service. By this rite, ordained ministerial standing is conferred and the covenantal relationship is liturgically celebrated. The Association presents to the newly ordained minister an ordination certificate attesting to the actions taken. Request for this certificate must be received by the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team at least three weeks prior to the date needed.
	15 An accurate record of the proceedings and actions of the Association Committee on the Ministry and the Association ecclesiastical council should be kept. The Association informs the Conference office of the actions taken. The Association or Conference informs the Office of General Ministries and Parish Life and Leadership of the actions taken.

THE CHURCH'S EXPECTATIONS OF ITS CANDIDATES FOR ORDINATION

FAITH AFFIRMATIONS

Is compelled by the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Has a sense of having been called by God and the Church to ordained ministry

Has a sense of vocational direction

Is committed to the mission of the Church

Can clearly articulate a personal theological position

Can clearly articulate a theological understanding of ordination

Can relate his or her understanding of ordained ministry to the ministry to which he or she has received a call or is seeking a call

CHURCH LOYALTY

Is an active member of a local church of the United Church of Christ

Is committed to service in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ

Is committed to an ecumenical stance and efforts

Is committed to active participation in the United Church of Christ beyond the local church (Association, Conference, national, etc.)

Keeps informed about the issues and concerns facing the United Church of Christ and its various parts

Is familiar with the publications and resources of the United Church of Christ

Is committed to the up building of the whole people of God

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Has attained a general liberal arts education (bachelor's degree or its equivalent)

Has graduated or will graduate from an approved theological seminary.

Is able to relate the Christian faith to contemporary issues

Has engaged in a disciplined study of and has acquired considerable knowledge in the following fields:

- The Bible
- Biblical interpretation
- Christian education
- Christian ethics
- Church history
- Contemporary culture
- Evangelism and church growth

- Ministry resources
- Stewardship
- Theology
- United Church of Christ history, polity, practice, and theological roots
- Worship, sacraments, liturgy

Has acquired considerable skill in:

- Administration
- Counseling
- Group dynamics
- Interpersonal relationships
- Listening and communicating
- Organizing
- Pastoral care
- Planning and goal setting
- Preaching and worship leadership
- Teaching
- Working with volunteers and volunteer institutions

Is prepared to lead the church as a community in mission

PERSONAL QUALITIES

Is able to acknowledge own limitations

Is accepting of diversity

Is adaptable

Has capacity for growth and development

Lives a Christian lifestyle

Is courageous

Has empathy

Has integrity

Is mature

Has an open and affirming style of relating to persons and ideas

Is resourceful

Has a sense of her or his identity

Has a sense of proportion

Has a sense of responsibility

Has vision

ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

24. Ordained ministerial standing is ongoing recognition as an ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ and provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry. Ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ is granted by and held in an Association and confers voting membership in the Association.

BYLAW PROVISIONS

107. Ordination by an Association of the United Church of Christ, in cooperation with the local church, confers ordained ministerial standing as an Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ and status as an ordained ministerial partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

109. An Ordained Minister moving from the bounds of one Association to another applies for a transfer of ordained ministerial standing to the new Association.

110. An Ordained Minister engaged in parish ministry has standing in the Association in which the local church served has standing. An Ordained Minister engaged in other than the parish ministry has standing in the Association where his or her local church membership is held.

111. An Ordained Minister engaged in a ministry requiring prolonged absence from the United States or one that does not permit a fixed residence is entitled to have ordained ministerial standing in the Association of his or her choice.

112. An Ordained Minister who withdraws from active service in the ordained ministry prior to retirement applies to his or her Association for leave of absence. The Association may grant such leave of absence for one year at a time. Except in special cases, such leave of absence is not granted for more than five years in succession.

113. An Ordained Minister retiring from active service by reason of age or disability retains ordained ministerial standing in the Association of his or her choice.

114. An Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ serving a Local Church not affiliated with the United Church of Christ or the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or serving a Local Church of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) without Ordained Ministerial Partner standing retains ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ so long as his or her Association approves.

115. A pastor's church membership is in the local church that he or she serves, but such membership shall not affect his or her standing in the United Church of Christ or disqualify that pastor from serving as a delegate to the General Synod or holding elective office in that body.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Ordained ministerial standing is the authorization conferred by an Association on an ordained minister to exercise all the prerogatives of the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ.

Ordained ministerial standing is automatically granted at the time of ordination and is the authorization for ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ. Once ordained, ordained ministerial standing is the "ongoing recognition as an Ordained Minister of the United Church of Christ and provides ongoing ecclesiastical authorization to perform the duties and exercise the prerogatives of ordained ministry" (*Constitution of the United Church of Christ*, paragraph 24). Thus, ordained ministers who have resigned their ordained ministerial standing or who have had their ordained ministerial standing removed by an Association are no longer authorized ordained ministers of the United Church of Christ. Persons without ordained ministerial standing will not be listed among ordained ministers in the *United Church of Christ Yearbook*.

Ordained ministerial standing is transferable from one Association to another when an ordained minister receives a call within a different Association. Ordained ministerial standing may be granted to ordained ministers from other denominations only after they have been granted privilege of call by an Association and have received and accepted a call within an Association. The current *Yearbook* contains the listing of all United Church of Christ ordained ministers who hold ordained ministerial standing.

The Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ do not provide for, nor does the *Yearbook* recognize, particular arrangements internal to an Association such as partial or limited ordained ministerial standing or ordination. Once listed in the *Yearbook* as a person with ordained ministerial standing, the person then is eligible to have a Ministerial Profile on file with the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team and is eligible to seek a call in any Association of the United Church of Christ.

If the Association notifies the Office of General Ministries that ordained ministerial standing has been granted, the ordained minister will be listed as holding ordained ministerial standing and will continue to be so listed until the Office of General Ministries is officially notified by the Association that ordained ministerial standing has been terminated.

Ordained ministerial standing is granted to a person in one of these ways: ordination, privilege of call followed by securing a call, transfer of ordained ministerial standing, or reinstatement following termination of ordained ministerial standing.

ORDINATION. THE GRANTING OF ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

When an Association of the United Church of Christ ordains a United Church of Christ member, ordained ministerial standing is automatically granted to that person by that Association.

PRIVILEGE OF CALL

When an ordained minister from another denomination has received privilege of call in the United Church of Christ and has secured a call to a local church of the United Church of Christ, he or she applies to the Association in which the local church to be served is located.

In those cases where the call is to a local church within the Association in which privilege of call has been granted, ordained ministerial standing may be granted without further examination. It can be assumed that the Association already has thoroughly examined the candidate in order to grant privilege of call and has found her or him therefore qualified for ordained ministerial standing.

In those cases in which the call is to a local church within an Association which has not granted the person privilege of call, that Association reserves the right to examine the person in order to satisfy itself that he or she meets all of the requirements for ordained ministerial standing in that Association. In doing this, the Association may request all of the documentation provided to the Association that originally granted privilege of call as well as a letter of reference for the person from that Association. It is recommended that, at the very least, the Association Committee on the Ministry interview the person who has privilege of call from another Association in order to get to know the person and to share with her or him the expectations the Association has of its ordained ministers.

THE TRANSFER OF ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

When ordained ministers move from the bounds of one Association to another, they are required to transfer their ordained ministerial standing to the new Association. In reality, the transfer occurs when the new Association recognizes and accepts the person's ordained ministerial standing and notifies the Association where the person's ordained ministerial standing originally has been held.

STEP 1

APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER

The ordained minister who has received a call within another Association applies to the new Association for her or his ordained ministerial standing to be recognized, accepted, and transferred.

The request should be accompanied by the following documentation:

- Verification of membership in the United Church of Christ.
- A written statement indicating the reasons for seeking the transfer of ordained ministerial standing.
- Evidence of a call to a ministry position recognized by that Association.

CONSIDERATION OF THE APPLICATION

The new Association receives and reviews the request and the documentation. It may handle the application in one of several ways:

a. If the ordained minister is moving to accept a call to a local church pastorate, the new Association requests verification of and comment on the standing from the Association in which the ordained ministerial standing is currently held. Based on this verification and comment, the new Association may grant ordained ministerial standing to the person. The new Association then notifies the other Association of its action, and the person's ordained ministerial standing is considered transferred.

b. In the case of a person newly ordained whose call is in an Association other than the one in which the person was ordained, the two Associations have to work out a mutually agreeable procedure for transferring the person's ordained ministerial standing. While an Association may accept the action of the ordaining Association and receive the person's ordained ministerial standing, an Association always retains the right to examine any person applying to it for the transfer of ordained ministerial standing. That Association may choose to make an independent judgment about the person's qualifications and fitness for ordained ministry within its bounds.

c. In the case of a person moving to accept a call to a non-parish ministry, the new Association must first determine that the calling body is a recognized setting for ordained ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. If this ministry is one that has not been recognized previously by the Association, the Committee on the Ministry will need to satisfy itself that it is a valid setting for ordained ministry. The Committee may want to meet with representatives of the calling body in making this determination.

The new Association will need to follow one of the above options in order to receive the transfer of ordained ministerial standing.

An Association requests specific information from another Association about an ordained minister moving into its bounds from that Association. The new Association may want to ask the other Association Committee on the Ministry any of the following:

- Is this person in good standing?
- Are there any official actions related to this person that have been taken by the Association ecclesiastical council or Association Committee on the Ministry about which the new Association should know?
- How has this person served in the life of the Association or Conference? What experience and skill does the person have that may be called on in the new Association?
- Are there any concerns about this person that the Association would like to share with the new Committee on the Ministry?

It is recommended that when considering the transfer of ordained ministerial standing, the Committee on the Ministry interview the person for the following purposes:

- to become acquainted with the person and his or her pilgrimage in ministry.
- to review the request and documentation with the person.
- to determine the person's fitness and qualifications for ordained ministerial standing in that Association.
- to interpret that Association's requirements for and expectations of those holding ordained ministerial standing.
- to review the terms of call to the new ordained ministry position.

Recognizing the transfer of a person's ordained ministerial standing into its bounds is the decision of the Association. In some cases, the recognition of transfer will require a vote of the Association to ratify the action of the Committee on the Ministry. Many Associations delegate this authority to their Committees on the Ministry

STEP 4

COVENANTING

If the person's call is to a ministry in other than a local church, the Committee on the Ministry convenes a covenant-making meeting of the ordained minister, representatives of the local church where the ordained minister is a member, representatives of the calling body, and the Association Committee on the Ministry. (See step 12 in the Ordained Ministry Chart and the commentary in the "Ordained Ministry" section of this *Manual* for details about this meeting.)

STEP 5

REPORTING

When ordained ministerial standing is recognized and accepted, the new Association notifies the Conference office and Association from which the person has transferred. The new Association or Conference notifies the Office of General Ministries and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team of the action taken.

A certificate attesting to ordained ministerial standing is available to the Association from the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team and may be ordered by registrars or other persons on behalf of the Association.

STEPS 6–7

INSTALLATION

Once an ordained minister has ordained ministerial standing, he or she is eligible to be installed in his or her new ministry. Upon request from the ordained minister and the local church, the Association arranges for a service of installation. Installation is the responsibility of the Association, which should take the lead in planning the service. If the call is to a local church, the person and local church cooperate in planning the installation service. If the call is to a ministry position in other than a local church, it is

expected that the calling body and the local church where the person is a member will be included in the planning and holding of the installation service.

THE LOCATION OF ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

The Bylaws of the United Church of Christ provide for ordained ministerial standing to be held in an Association as follows:

1. For ordained ministers serving local churches of the United Church of Christ, ordained ministerial standing is held in the Association in which the local church served is located.

2. For an ordained minister serving in other than a local church, ordained ministerial standing is held in the Association in which her or his local church membership is held. The Association must make the decision that the setting for ministry is one that it recognizes as requiring an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ.

3. For ordained ministers serving in ministries requiring prolonged absence from the United States or those which do not permit a fixed residence, ordained ministerial standing is held in the Association of the person's choosing.

Choice in this matter is given to the person so that he or she can assess how best to remain connected to the Church to make possible mutual accountability within the covenantal relationship. The person still has the full prerogatives of ordained ministerial standing, including the voting rights and eligibility for offices in the Association and Conference in which ordained ministerial standing is held.

This provision applies primarily to overseas missionaries and to persons serving in military chaplaincies. In most cases, those persons serving overseas will hold ordained ministerial standing in an Association that knows them and in which they had ordained ministerial standing at the time of their overseas assignment or in which they have had ordained ministerial standing previously.

For persons in the United States who are serving in positions that require them to move frequently, it is recommended that they transfer their ordained ministerial standing each time they move to the Association in which their ministry is located or their local church membership is held. These persons are encouraged to participate actively in the Conference and Association in which they are located. The Association Committee on the Ministry is encouraged to be in close and supportive relationship with them and to include them in its periodic review procedures.

The Association must make the decision that the setting for ministry is one it recognizes as warranting an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and one with which it can be in covenantal relationship.

4. For ordained ministers who retire because of age or disability, ordained ministerial standing is held in the Association of the person's choosing.

The provision for giving the person her or his choice in this matter is intended to give the person the right to transfer her or his ordained ministerial standing to a new place of residence without the need for a call to a ministry in the new Association. Retired or disabled clergy are encouraged to hold their ordained ministerial standing in the Association in which they reside. These persons are encouraged to participate in the life of the Association and Conference in which they are located. The Association Committee on the Ministry is encouraged to be in close and supportive relationship with them and to include them in its periodic review procedures.

5. For ordained ministers who serve local churches not affiliated with the United Church of Christ, ordained ministerial standing may be retained in the United Church of Christ on approval of an Association. Ordained ministerial standing is held in the Association in which the local church served is located.

THE LOCATION OF ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

Type of Ordained Minister	Association of Local Church Served	Association of Local Church Membership	Association of Choice
Ordained Ministers Serving UCC Churches	X		
Ordained Ministers Serving in Other than UCC Parish Ministry		X	
Ordained Ministers Without Fixed Residence			X
Retired Ordained Ministers			X
Ordained Ministers Serving Non-UCC Churches	X		

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

BYLAW PROVISION

112. An Ordained Minister who withdraws from active service in the ordained ministry prior to retirement applies to his or her Association for leave of absence. The Association may grant such leave of absence for one year at a time. Except in special cases such leave of absence is not granted for more than five years in succession.

COMMENTARY

Leave of absence may be granted to an ordained minister by an Association. When granting leave of absence, the Committee on the Ministry should ensure that the reasons for granting it are clearly specified, and the Committee should establish a timeline and procedure for regularly reviewing this status. Normally, leave of absence is granted for one of the following reasons:

a. The person has withdrawn from or is no longer performing the functions of ordained ministry, but is actively seeking an ordained ministry position.

b. The person has withdrawn from or is no longer performing the functions of ordained ministry and is in a process of evaluating his or her future as an ordained minister.

c. The person has withdrawn from or is no longer performing the functions of ordained ministry because of family considerations, such as the rearing of a child, because of prolonged illness, in order to engage in an extended period of study, and so on. In any event, the expectation is that the person will perform the functions of ordained ministry in the near future and certainly within five years.

Persons on leave of absence continue to hold ordained ministerial standing. The conditions of the leave of absence will be specified by the Association Committee on the Ministry, including what functions of ordained ministry may be performed, if any, and voting rights in the Association and Conference. Ordained persons on leave of absence will continue to be listed in the *United Church of Christ Yearbook*, will continue to be eligible to have a Ministerial Profile with the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team, and will continue to participate in the United Church of Christ pension program under its rules and provisions. Ordained ministers on leave of absence are expected to hold membership and participate in a local church of the United Church of Christ.

Leave of absence is granted for one year at a time and is not granted for more than five years in succession for an ordained minister, except in special cases.

The terms and responsibilities of a leave of absence must be worked out between the person and the Association Committee on the Ministry at the beginning of the agreement to grant leave of absence. Subsequently, the

Committee will hold an annual review meeting regarding the person on leave of absence. It is important for the Committee on the Ministry to keep careful records of its actions related to leave of absence including the date on which the leave of absence begins.

If a person resigns his or her ordained ministerial standing while on leave of absence, the records of the Committee on the Ministry about the leave of absence should be maintained so that they will be available if the person applies for reinstatement of ordained ministerial standing at some future time.

If a person transfers her or his ordained ministerial standing while on leave of absence, the new Association reviews the terms of the leave of absence in order to determine whether it will grant the leave of absence.

TERMINATION OF ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

There are a number of circumstances that may lead to the termination of a person's standing as an Ordained Minister in the United Church of Christ. These circumstances and the processes and procedures to be followed by the Association Committee on the Ministry are described in section 8 of this *Manual*, "The Oversight of Ministries Authorized by the United Church of Christ." See the procedures related to the Information Review and those related to a Fitness Review.

REINSTATEMENT OF ORDAINED MINISTERIAL STANDING

Reinstatement of ordained ministerial standing is an action by an Association or Association Committee on the Ministry that restores ordained ministerial standing to a person who had ordained ministerial standing at one time but subsequently had the standing terminated by an Association.

Persons who have had their ordained ministerial standing terminated still are ordained ministers. The termination of ordained ministerial standing removes their authorization for ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ. The reinstatement of ordained ministerial standing restores this authorization.

Reinstatement results from an examination of an ordained minister to determine if she or he still has all of the qualifications for ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. The nature and thoroughness of the examination will depend on a number of factors including:

- The reasons for the termination of the person's ordained ministerial standing when this action was taken. For example, if the person resigned his or her ordained ministerial standing because he or she had withdrawn from the functions of ordained ministry, the examination will be of a different nature than if the person's ordained ministerial standing were terminated because of disciplinary reasons.

- The length of time that has elapsed since the person's ordained ministerial standing was terminated. In general, the longer the elapsed time, the more thorough the examination needs to be.
- The familiarity of the Committee on the Ministry with the circumstances surrounding the termination. If members of the Committee are available who were present when the person's ordained ministerial standing was terminated and who, therefore, are familiar with the circumstances, then the Committee will not have to gather as much data than if this were not the case.

When the Committee on the Ministry receives a request from an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ for reinstatement of ordained ministerial standing, the Committee's first task is to familiarize itself with the details of the reasons that resulted in the termination of the person's ordained ministerial standing. If the standing was terminated by the Committee on the Ministry to which the present request for reinstatement is directed, the Committee will thoroughly study the minutes of its meetings in which the termination action was taken and any files created at that time relative to the termination.

If the request for reinstatement comes to an Association that was not the Association that took the termination action, then the Association should request a thorough report from the Association that took the termination action regarding the circumstances that led to its action.

After reviewing all of the data surrounding the termination of the person's ordained ministerial standing, the Committee on the Ministry schedules an interview with the person. The purpose of the interview is to determine the following:

a. Have the circumstances that led to the termination of ordained ministerial standing changed so that the person may be considered for reinstatement?

b. Does the person meet all of the present requirements for ordination established by the Committee on the Ministry? Does the person satisfactorily meet "The Church's Expectations of Its Candidates for Ordination," described at the conclusion of the Ordained Ministry Chart? How has the passage of time affected the person's skills, knowledge, and personal qualities?

The Committee may decide to request that the person write a paper in preparation for the interview (e.g., present understandings of ordained ministry, theological perspective, etc.).

The Committee has a variety of decisions available to it after it interviews the person and deliberates on what it finds. The Committee may:

- approve the request for reinstatement, subject to the person receiving a call to a recognized ordained ministry.
- require the person to provide additional information or to fulfill prescribed requests from the Committee before it will make its decision.

- deny the request for reinstatement and provide the person with the reasons for the denial.

INSTALLATION OF AN ORDAINED MINISTER

BYLAW PROVISIONS

123. When an Ordained Minister accepts a call to a local church, the Ordained Minister and the church join in requesting the Association to arrange for a service of installation or recognition.

124. Report of the service of installation or recognition is signed by the proper officer of the Association and by the Conference Minister and is forwarded to Office of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

GUIDELINES FOR INSTALLATION

Installation is the liturgical celebration of the covenantal relationship among an ordained minister; the local church or calling body where the person is engaged in ministry; the local church where the person is a member, if different from the one being served; and the Association.

Installation is an act of the Association. It is the responsibility of the Association to ensure that all partners to the covenant are satisfied that there is a basis for covenant among them. Upon request from the ordained minister and the local church, the Association takes leadership in planning the installation service in cooperation with the other partners to the covenantal relationship.

It is recommended that an installation service be held when an ordained minister begins any ministry recognized by the Association. When the ministry is in a local church, the installation service will normally be held in that church. When the ministry is in other than a local church, the installation service will normally be held in the local church where the ordained minister is a member.

In those cases when a person is ordained in the local church where he or she will serve, the installation service may be held at the same time as the ordination. Normally, an installation service will include a charge to the ordained minister; to the congregation or calling body; to the local church where the ordained minister is a member, if other than where he or she is serving; and to the Association.

TRANSFER OF ORDAINED MINISTRY STEPS 1–4

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
1 An ordained minister who holds ordained ministerial standing in an Association receives a call to a recognized ordained ministry in another Association and applies to the new Association for recognition of, acceptance of, and transfer of her or his ordained ministerial standing. The following documentation is provided to the new Association by the ordained minister: a. Verification of membership in the United Church of Christ. b. A written statement indicating reasons for seeking the transfer of ministerial standing. c. Evidence of a call to a ministry position recognized by the new Association.	
The ordained minister is interviewed by the Association Committee on the Ministry.	
The ordained minister participates in the covenant-making meeting.	Representatives of the ordained minister's local church participate in the covenant-making meeting.

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
	2 The Association Committee on the Ministry receives and reviews the application and documentation. It may request additional information about the person from the Association where her or his ordained ministerial standing is held. It determines that the ministry to which the person is being called is one the Association recognizes as a valid setting for ordained ministry.
	3 The Committee on the Ministry interviews the ordained minister to: a. Get to know the person. b. Review his or her request and documentation. c. Determine the person's fitness and qualifications for ordained ministerial standing in that Association. d. Interpret the Association's expectations of its ordained ministers. e. Review the terms of call. The Committee decides whether or not to recognize and accept the person's ordained ministerial standing.
Representatives of the calling body participate in the covenant-making meeting.	4 If the person's call is to a ministry in other than a local church, the Committee convenes a meeting of (a) the ordained minister; (b) representatives of the local church where the ordained minister is a member, unless membership in a new location has not yet been established; (c) representatives of the calling body; and (d) the Association Committee on the Ministry. They review the letter of call and its provisions and explore the nature of the covenantal relationship among the four partners. All need to agree that there is a basis for a covenantal relationship among them.

TRANSFER OF ORDAINED MINISTRY STEPS 1–5

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
The ordained minister cooperates in requesting the installation.	6 The local church and ordained minister request the Association to install the ordained minister in the new ministry.
The ordained minister cooperates with the Association in planning and holding an installation service. The ordained minister is installed.	Representatives of the local church participate in planning and holding an installation service.

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
	5 If the ordained ministerial standing is recognized and accepted, the Association notifies the Association where the person's ordained ministerial standing has been held and the standing is considered transferred. The Association notifies the Conference office of the action taken. The Association or Conference notifies the Office of General Ministries and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team of the action taken.
Representatives of the calling body participate in planning and holding an installation service.	7 The Association Committee on the Ministry, in cooperation with the local church, the ordained minister, and the calling body, if other than a local church, plans and holds a service of installation to recognize and celebrate the ministry and the covenantal relationship among the partners.